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Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 IO-10 NEA-10 AID-05 PC-01 SY-05 /097 W
---------- 057053
R 201750Z OCT 75 ZFG
FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7708
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY ACCRA
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY NIAMEY
AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 1588

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, DM
SUBJ: DAHOMEAN GOVT TAKES MEASURES TO SUPPRESS ALLEGED COUP PLOT

1. SUMMARY: DAHOMEAN GOVT HAS ANNOUNCED DISCOVERY OF A "VAST" PLOT BY ZINSOUISTS TO KILL MEMBERS OF POLITICAL BURAN AND MINISTERS. PARTY MILITANTS HAVE BEEN GIVEN GREEN LIGHT TO HELP SECURITY FORCES "LIQUIDATE" COUNTERREVOLUTIONARIES, PARTICULARLY ZINSOUISTS. POLICE ARE BUSY ROUNDING UP "LOCAL STOOGES OF INTERNATIONAL IMPERIALISTS". WE BELIEVE GOVT'S ACTION IS A PRE-EMPTIVE PLOY DESIGNED COUNTER ANY COUP ATTEMPT THAT MAY BE ON VERGE OF IMPLEMENTATION AND IT ALSO PROVIDES PRETEXT FOR FURTHER SUPPRESSION OF OPPOSITION. END SUMMARY

2. IN SPECIAL BROADCAST SATURDAY EVENING OCT 18, DAHOMEY'S COMMUNIST INFORMATION AND INTERIOR MINISTER LT MARTIN AZONHIHO ANNOUNCED DISCOVERY OF "VAST NEW PLOT" BY EX-PRES EMILE DERLIN-ZINSOU TO OVERTHROW DAHOMEAN GOVT. ACCORDING
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TO HIS COMMUNIQUE, THE PLOT, SLATED TO BE CARRIED OUT THAT VERY

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DAY, INVOLVED FOREIGN MERCENARIES, SABOTAGE AND ASSASSINATION OF MEMBERS OF THE POLITICAL BUREAU AND GOVT. MINISTER CALLED ON ALL MEMBERS OF THE VARIOUS LOCAL REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEES THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY TO PLACE THEMSELVES AT THE DISPOS-ITION OF SECURITY FORCES TO ASSIST THEM IN LIQUIDATING THE LOCAL "STOOGES" (OF INTERNATIONAL IMPERIALISM) PARTICULARLY THE ZINSOUISTS.

3. DESPITE PROLIFERATION OF POLICE ROAD BLOCKS AND ACTIVITY OF TROOPS, COTONOU REMAINS CALM. MACHINE GUNS HAVE BEEN SET UP AROUND THE PRESIDENCY AND PRESIDENT'S HOUSE AND GUARDS STRENGTHENED AT RADIO STATION. SUSPECTED ZINSOU SYMPATHIZERS ARE BEING ROUNDED UP AND INCARCERATED AT CAMP GUEZO. BORDER WITH TOGO HAS BEEN CLOSED SINCE LATE SATURDAY. LARGE PRO-GOVT DEMONSTRATIONS WERE HELD IN COTONOU SATURDAY AND TODAY (OCT 20.

4. DAHOMEY HAD BEEN RIFE WITH RUMORS OVER PAST FEW WEEKS THAT "SOMETHING WOULD HAPPEN" AT OCT 26 LOKOSSA CELEBRATIONS ON THE THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF COUP D'ETAT THAT BROUGHT KEREKOU REGIME TO POWER. AN EMBASSY SOURCE WHO SAW ZINSOU IN PARIS RECENTLY WAS WARNED BY HIM TO BE CAREFUL ON THAT DATE. ACCORD-ING TO ANOTHER A TRUCKLOAD OF ARMS TRANSITING DAHOMEY FROM TOGO TO NIGERIA HAS DISAPPEARED. FOREIGN MERCENARIES REFERRED TO BY AZONHIHO POSSIBLY INCLUDE SIX ARABS ARRESTED HERE IN AUG APPARENTLY EN ROUTE TO WORK AT OIL REFINERY IN TOGO. AS FAR AS WE KNOW THEY ARE BEING HELD IN PARAKOU, 250 MILES NORTH OF HERE. AZONHIHO IS REPORTEDLY CONVINCED THAT THOSE ARABS ARE MERCENARIES HIRED TO KILL KEREKOU AND HIMSELF.

5. ONLY WAY IN WHICH USG HAS BEEN TOUCHED BY AFOREMENTIONED WEEKEND EVENTS WAS ARREST AND OVERNIGHT DETENTION OF ONCE PC VOLUNTEER WHO WAS NOT CARRYING HIS IDENTIFY PAPERS.

6. COMMENT: SOME CONSIPRACY IS OF COURSE GOING ON AMONG DAHOMEAN EXPATRIATES IN PARIS, LOME, DAKAR AND PERHAPS ONE OR TWO OTHER CAPITALS ABROAD. GOVT HAS BEEN AWARE OF THIS CONSPIRACY FOR SOME TIME. THE "PLOT DISCOVERY" IS PROBABLY PREEMPTIVE OPERATION BY THE GOVT TO DISRUPT ANY IMMINENT COUP ATTEMPT AND TO PROVIDE A PRETEXT FOR GETTING RID OF CONFIDENTIAL

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POTENTIAL ADVERSARIES AND FOR TAKING FURTHER MEASURES TO SMASH "COUNTERREVOLUTION" (SUCH AS NATIONALIZATION, CONFISCATION OF PRIVATE PROPERTY OF ALLEGED REGIME OPPONENTS, BREAK FROM FRANC ZONE, CABINENT SHAKEUP TO ELIMINATE MODERATES ALTOGETHER, ETC)

7. THERE ARE REPORTS, GIVEN SOME CREDENCE BY THE FRENCH THAT FORNMIN ALLADAYE IS BEING DITCHED AND MAY BE UNDER ARREST.

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SINCE MOST RUMORS HERE ARE UNTRUE ANYHOW, AND ALLADAYE HAS SURVIVED IN THE PAST WHEN RUMOR-MONGERS PREDICTED HIS DEMISE, WE VIEW SUCH REPORTS WITH CONSIDERABLE RESERVE. NEVERTHELESS, FROM A REVOLUTIONARY POINT OF VIEW THE PRESENT MOMENT MIGHT WELL BE A GOOD ONE FOR A PURGE.

8. ONE DISTURBING ELEMENT OF THE SITUATION IS GREEN LIGHT GOVT HAS GIVEN TO "LIQUIDATION" OF ZINSOUISTS WHERE EVER THEY MAY BE FOUND. THIS SUGGESTS POSSIBILITY OF SUMMARY EXECUTIONS, WHICH WOULD REPRESENT A BREAK FROM DAHOMEAN TRADITION. THERE ARE PLENTY OF PARAMILITARY PERSONEL AVAILABLE NOW TO CARRY OUT "REVOLUTIONARY JUSTICE" (SINCE THE POPULAR REBELLION IN JUNE AZONHIHO HAS FORMED AND TRAINED GROUPS OF YOUTH FOR COMMANDO DUTY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, AND HE IS SAID TO HAVE SOME SPECIAL "GOOD SQUADS"). AND, NOT TO BE FORGOTTEN, THIS IS THE FIRST CRISIS SITUATION IN WHICH AZONHIHO HAS BEEN IN FULL CONTROL OF THE INTERNAL SECURITY APPARATUS. END COMMENT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION, SECURITY CONTROLS, LIBERATION FRONTS, POLICE FORCES, ARRESTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 OCT 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975COTONO01588
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750364-0382
From: COTONOU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751038/aaaabhxs.tel
Line Count: 133
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <27 MAY 2003 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <28 MAY 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

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US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DAHOMEAN GOVT TAKES MEASURES TO SUPPRESS ALLEGED COUP PLOT
TAGS: PINS, DM
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006